Trafficking of women and children

1900. SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI:
SHRI MOTILAL VORA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Ministry of Women and Child Development have requested the Ministry of External Affairs to take necessary action for implementation of the provisions of the 'SAARC convention against illegal trafficking of women and children;

(b) if so, the action taken by Government in this direction; and

(c) the action being taken by Government to stop illegal trafficking of women and children to other countries in addition to SAARC countries?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) The SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children has been ratified by all member States and entered into force on 15 November 2005. A Regional Task Force has been constituted by SAARC member States to implement the Convention. The first meeting of this Task Force was held in New Delhi on 26 July, 2007. The Indian delegation included representatives from Ministries of External Affairs, Women and Child Development and Home Affairs. The meeting decided to: (i) exchange of best practices by the respective Governments, NGOs and members of the civil society to combat trafficking, (ii) develop a Standard operating procedure to implement various provisions of the Convention, (iii) Offer of Government of India to conduct relevant training programmes in capacity building for stakeholders of SAARC Member States.

(c) Government have adopted a multi-pronged approach to combat trafficking, both within the country and also cross-border, which encompasses efforts ranging from prevention through stronger law enforcement to rescue and rehabilitation of victims. Whenever cases of trafficking involving foreign countries come to notice, the matter is also promptly taken up for resolution bilaterally through diplomatic channels.

Functioning of passport offices

1901. SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE:
SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that C.A.G. in its report No. 12 of 2007 has expressed strong resentment on the functioning of the passport offices;

(b) if so, what are their main observations; and

(c) the proposal of Government to set right the present state of affairs?

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (c) The Comptroller and Auditor General of India in his report on the Performance audit of Passport, Visa and Consular Services covering the period 2000-01 to 2004-05 has observed certain deficiencies and has made recommendations to improve the performance of Passport, Visa and Consular services. A summary of main observations is given in the Statement *(See* below). Steps have been taken to rectify the deficiencies pointed out by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India.

Statement

Summary of important observations

- Proper records need to be maintained for receipt, destruction and balance of Returned undelivered (RUD) passports. These passports may be destroyed in the presence of a responsible officer who should Certify the fact under his dated signatures.
- The Ministry of External Affairs should institute efficient internal control system to ensure full compliance with rules in regard to impounding/revoking of the passports and determine accountability for non-compliance.
- Provisions may be made in the system to prevent the issue of a duplicate passport in lieu of a lost passport without a specific reference to the related loss circular. A register of cases containing details regarding lost passports, loss circulars and dates of their despatch needs to be maintained.
- The Ministry of External Affairs needs to modify the software system so as to show uniform and latest status of a passport wherever it appears in the system.
- Proper records of cancelled passports should be maintained. As these passports cannot be issued, these should be destroyed in the presence of a responsible officer who may record a certificate under his dated signatures to this effect.
- The Minister of Home Affairs should persuade the state police authorities to create a separate cell to handle police verification of passport related matters within the prescribed time.
- The Regional Passport Offices/Passport Offices (RPOs/POs) need to maintain a record of the revoked/impounded passports, its revocation/ impounding circular number, date of its despatch and number of the entry made in the computer system. This record should be reviewed monthly by the concerned RPOs/POs.
- The missing and damaged travel documents should be investigated thoroughly and also immediately reported to the concerned security agencies, Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs, Passport Issuing Authorities and other authorities to avoid their misuse.

• Stock registers should correctly record each receipt, issue and balance of blank travel documents. Physical verification of stock should be conducted as per codal provisions and the discrepancies promptly investigated to rule out any pilferage.

Eighth World Hindi Conference

1902. SHRI DATTA MEGHE:
SHRI SANJAY RAUT:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Eighth 'Vishwa Hindi Sammelan' was organized in United Nation's headquarters in New York on 13th July, 2007;

(b) if so, the subjects which were discussed in this Sammelan;

(c) whether this matter was also discussed with Rashtrabhasha Prachar Samiti, Vardha, which has been organizing such conferences till now; and

(d) the efforts made to ensure that officials of our High Commissions and Embassies can interact in Hindi with Indians and people of Indian Origin living abroad?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): (a) The 8th World Hindi Conference was held from 13-15 July, 2007 in New York. Its inaugural session was held at the UN Headquarters in New York on July 13, 2007.

(b) 9 Academic Sessions were held during the 8th World Hindi Conference on the following subjects:

(i) Hindi in the United Nations Organization

(ii) Teaching of Hindi in India and Abroad - Problems and Solutions

(iii) Globalization, Media and Hindi

(iv) Hindi writing abroad - Pravasi Hindi Sahitya

(v) Role of Information Technology in Promotion of Hindi

(vi) Role of Hindi films in Propagation of Hindi

(vii) Hindi, Youth and Science

(viii) Hindi Language and Literature - Various Dimensions

(ix) Role of Translation in Literature, Hindi Children Literature, Devnagri Script

(c) Chairman of Rashtra Bhasha Prachar Samiti, Wardha was closely associated with the organization of the conference. He was a member of the Steering Committee of the 8th World Hindi Conference and was also a member of the sub committee which was constituted by Minister of State for External Affairs for recommending the venue of the 8th World Hindi Conference. He was, in addition, a member of the sub-committee constituted under the chairmanship of Minister of State for External Affairs for drafting the Declaration of the 8th World Hindi Conference.